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Common Ground

Ann Mortifee
Going deeper with life

Margaret Wheatley
Instinct for community

Women's Day March 8
Victories & challenges

Vancouver Peace Forum
It's happening

Globe 2006
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7:30PM — WHATEVER THE QUESTION, COMMUNITY IS THE ANSWER *with Margaret Wheatley*

In Western culture, many dynamics keep us apart; our focus on individualism, our belief that only the strong survive, and the increased speed at which we live. It is time for us to notice how these dynamics drive us apart, and to become active in restoring our relationships, communities, and families.

SAT. APRIL 8 — SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY AT HARBOUR CENTRE
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8:30 - 9:30AM — REGISTRATION

9:30 - 11:45AM — TAKING CHARGE OF TOMORROW TODAY
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12 - 1PM — LUNCH (INCLUDED)

1 - 4:30PM — INTERACTIVE PRESENTATIONS

Disengaging Depression: Essential Choices
with Joann Peterson & Judy Lemon

The Quantum Laugh–Shifting With Humour
with Carole Ames

Living From Your Heart–A Chinese Medicine Prospective
with Jane Olynyk

Passion And Darkness
with David Raithby & Sandey McCartney

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with Marlyn Farrell

Boundaries In The Workplace
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4:30 - 6PM — WINE & CHEESE

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Common Ground

ISSUE 176 MARCH 2006

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Renowned performer Ann Mortifee returns to the Arts Club this month to share a magical journey that will transport you to Africa. Her latest work *Into the Heart of the Sangoma* tells the story of her life-changing journey into the mysterious world of the Zulu Sangoma. www.artsclub.com

Cover photo by Tim Matheson
www.tmatheson.com

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The World Peace Forum has a full program of more than 200 speakers, seminars, panels and cultural events planned for June. Citizens and delegates are coming to Vancouver from all over the world.

Some of the many contributors and highlights are Dr. Helen Caldicott, founder of Physicians for Social Responsibility, International Peace Educators Conference, music and choral festivals, Noam Chomsky, peace film festival, Peace Boat from Kobe, Japan, September 11th Families for Peaceful Tomorrows, Doug Roche, Peace Walk & Festival at Sunset Beach, art installation for peace by Yoko Ono, Peace Café, exhibits including Hiroshima-Nagasaki photographs and artifacts, Michael Parenti, Mary-Wynne Ashford, Paul Roberts, and more.

This is your Peace Forum, a citizen's initiative, produced by the citizens of Vancouver with the World Peace Forum Society and the Vancouver Peace and Justice Committee.

While the new Vancouver City Council is pondering cutting its minority portion of funding support for the World Peace Forum that was pledged by previous council, the citizens of Vancouver are moving forward to build the World Peace Forum into the best it can be, and it is looking good!

Here is how you can help grow the World Peace Forum
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admin@worldpeaceforum.ca

Raven peace symbol

The symbol for the World Peace Forum 2006 was designed by Kwakiutl and Tlingit First Nations artist Corrine Hunt. "The Peace Raven protects the Earth and creates a peaceful environment for dialogue," Hunt explains.

Last October 13, the artist unveiled the symbol for the Peace Forum at the Chief Dan George Centre in Vancouver. Leonard George opened the ceremony and stressed the importance of having internal peace as the first step towards global peace. "All kinds of reconciliation have to happen before we can come to world peace," said George, who invited participants to join the First Nations celebrations and activities leading up to the World Peace Forum, June 23-28, 2006.

Corrine Hunt, Gwa'wina, explained that when she heard about the World Peace Forum, she phoned and offered to design a logo. The image draws from her Kwakiutl and Tlingit heritage, based on the raven's attributes of knowledge and creativity. "The Peace Raven is a symbol of wisdom," she said. "Inspired by this, we can create a wonderful environment of mindfulness and peace."

City councillor David Cadman reminds Vancouver citizens that the mayor of Athens made a call to all the cities that will host Olympic games – including Vancouver in 2010 – to include peace in their agendas. The Olympics have historically been a time when countries at war declared a truce. The UN designated Peace Messenger Cities, has chosen to hold its 18th convention in Vancouver in June to coincide with the Peace Forum.

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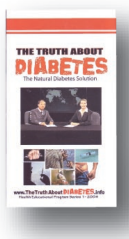

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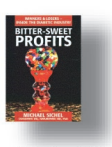

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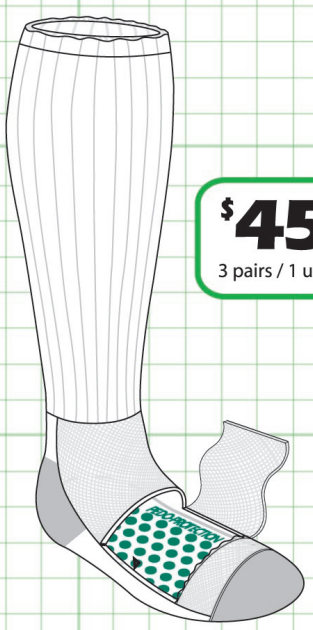

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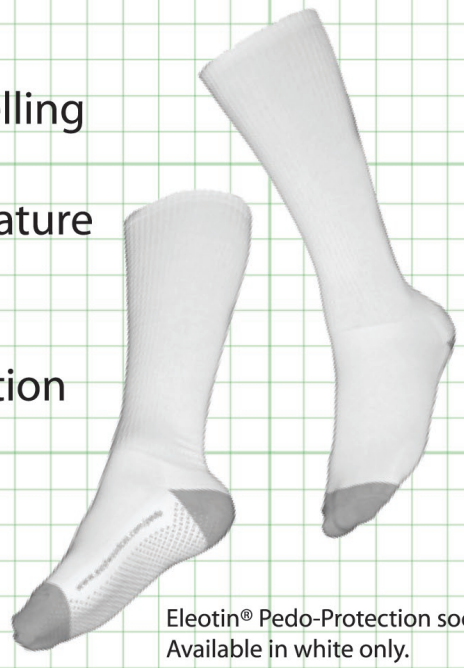

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Photo: Tim Matheson

Ann Mortifee with *Into the Heart of the Sangoma* co-performer Jenni Burke.

Photo: Sylvia Bak

Vusamazulu Credo Mutwa, spiritual leader (Sangoma) of the Zulu nation.

Going deeper with life

Dreaming with the Sangoma

Interview by Joseph Roberts

Ann Mortifee was born in Zululand, South Africa and moved to Canada as a child. As a teenager in Vancouver, she began singing with the legendary Josh White, and after successfully auditioning to sing in the first run of George Ryga's play The Ecstasy of Rita Joe, *she recognized the power of the arts to influence social awareness. Known throughout the world for her passionate and honest performances, Ann has released more than 10 CDs, written four musicals, and several ballet and film scores. She received the Order of Canada and the YWCA Woman of Distinction Award in 1992 for her outstanding contribution to the healing and performing arts in Canada.*

Common Ground: You're coming back to the stage. How does that feel?

Ann Mortifee: It feels wonderful to be back. Throughout my career, I have come and gone from music. Each time I've left the theatre, I have been able to take the time to go deeper with life. I live by the ocean and I'm a very tidal person. There's a moment when I've saturated the wave I've been riding and I have to retreat back into myself to go deeper to see what else is there.

CG: What have you been doing the last 15 years?

AM: I brought up my son. I moved to Cortes Island and built a beautiful house by the sea. I've worked throughout Europe with the dying. I created The Trust for Sustainable Forestry. And the latest thing I've written is the CD *Into the Heart of the Sangoma.* I'm now presenting the play of the same name.

CG: How did you come to write this play?

AM: When I wrote *When the Rains Come*, a musical that was my statement in support of the end of apartheid, the day it opened, as the lights were going up on the stage in Vancouver, men and women were lining up in the morning sun in South Africa to vote in the first free election. So my musical was magnificently obsolete on the night that it opened.

However, I learned from that experience that power lies not necessarily in what the world sees of our work, but that our dreaming also has a profound effect on what happens in the world. Each thought goes out, for better or worse, into the collective dream we are creating together. There were millions of people along with me who were dreaming, as well as working, toward a free South Africa, and all helped to turn the tide.

CG: How has that experience affected the show you are staging at the Arts Club?

AM: *Into the Heart of the Sangoma* really started with *When the Rains Come.* One of the main characters was a Zulu Sangoma. I was having dreams about her for some time. She became very real to me. Two years after writing *Rains,* I read a book by Vusamazulu Credo Mutwa, the head spiritual leader, or Sangoma, of the Zulu nation. I saw that I had written things in *Rains* that were actual Zulu myths and stories, of which I had had no previous knowledge.

It was through this that I returned to Africa to find Credo Mutwa. I had no idea where he was, but I asked everywhere I went. No one could help me find him. Finally, I found myself out on a game reserve one night with my little machine recording the night sounds. (You hear that on the CD.)

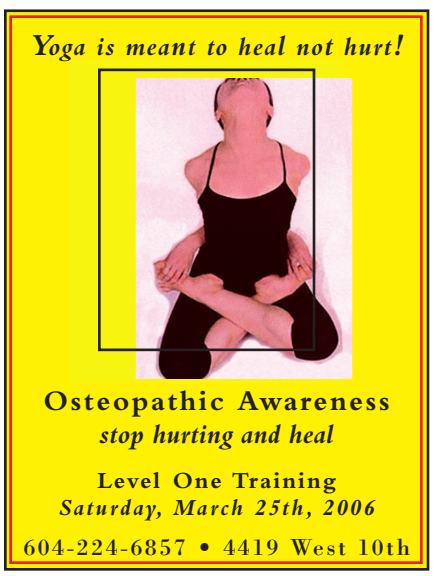
An elephant herd passed by and the matriarch stopped and turned and walked towards me. She lifted her trunk and waved at me and I lifted my hand and waved back. I mean, I'm sitting there with this huge being looking down at me. I could have been trampled at any moment, but I had this interface with her that totally changed me. As I was weeping and telling her how grateful I was, the full moon rose up behind her.

When I went to sleep that night, I relived the whole thing as if I was there again, except instead of her standing alone, the old black woman is there. And she said to me three times, "Go to Shamwari tomorrow." I woke up and wrote down the word, wondering what it meant. The next morning, I asked the game warden if he knew what it meant and he said it was a private game reserve about 30 minutes away.

Well, I got in my car and went there. I'd been looking everywhere for Credo Mutwa, and while I'm out on the reserve in the jeep, I see a little piece of paper that said, "If you're interested in seeing a traditional healing village, ask your guide about it." I told the guide I was interested and to tell me about it, and he said, "Oh, I don't suppose you've ever heard of Vusamazulu Credo Mutwa?"

The next thing you know, I'm in the healing village and there's an old Zulu woman who has been expecting me. She read the bones for me and I got drawn into a healing ceremony with her. I ended up in an eight-hour initiation ceremony in the middle of nowhere with six women. It was absolutely extraordinary.

When the dancing and singing started, I was feeling a little shy, but then I said to myself, "This is such a blessing; just receive what's being given and be grateful." And at that moment, I suddenly leaped to my feet and started to sing and dance. I knew all the songs. I knew all the steps. I knew when to move and when to stand still. I just got totally in line with these women and I danced with them for eight hours, non-stop.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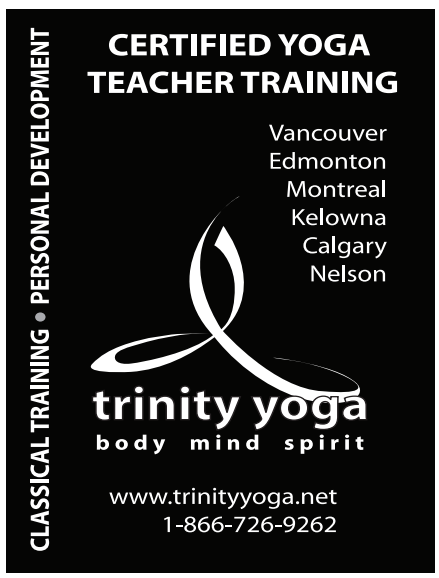

At a certain point, the grandmother stopped and said, "Now you sing for us." So I sang the song I'd been making up while driving and walking through Africa. It's the first song on the CD. She stopped me and said, "Who taught you this song?" "I just made it up," I said. She said, "You have not. That is the song we Sangomas sing when we go to spirit and call upon Nomkumbuluwana." And then they all started singing it with me.

At the end of my days in the village with the Sangomas, I was given a little piece of paper and it turned out to be Credo Mutwa's phone number. When I finally met Mutwa, he asked me to tell him about the sangoma of my dreams. I said, "Her name is Eskowe." He got me to say the name three times, then asked what she looked like. I said, "Her eyes are strange; one of them is white and the other one is black."

"Which eye is white?" he asked.

"It's the right eye," I said.

"And what do her legs look like?"

"Well, her legs look like the trunks of a tree."

And he said, "That woman is my grandmother. Her name was Eskowe. She had a cataract in her right eye, which turned it completely white and she had elephantitis, which made her legs look like tree trunks. My grandmother told me she was sending someone to me. I just did not expect it to be a white woman."

I couldn't believe it. The Sangoma that I had created in *When the Rains Come,* the Zulu woman who appears in my dreams, this woman was Credo Mutwa's grandmother!

Later, he said that his grandmother had a gift for me, but I had to tell him what it was or I could not receive it. He asked me several questions and somehow I knew all the answers. It all seemed so natural, as if we were having a simple conversation, and yet there I was, somehow knowing the answers to questions that were completely unknowable by any logical means. Nothing seemed out of the ordinary. I simply said what came into my thoughts. Even as I am saying this now, I wonder how often we are intuiting things that are true, but we doubt ourselves. It was like being in a dream, and yet it was more real than most of the encounters that I have with many human beings in my daily life.

It turned out that the gift that Mutwa's grandmother wanted me to have was her central divining bone, her most important and sacred relic. Before her, it had belonged to her great-grandmother, who had the same name.

Our dreaming makes a difference. It is still difficult for me to actually believe some of what has happened in the last years, but the truth is that the dreams I was dreaming have come true.

Ever since receiving this gift, I have felt a deep responsibility to discover why this bone has come to me and what it might require of me. I do know that the play and the CD of *Into the Heart of the Sangoma*, both with a central theme that questions dreams and reality, are my first tentative steps to make a gesture with Eskowe. It's a rich experience.

CG: What has helped you in your inner journey?

AM: One thing that has helped me tremendously on my journey is discovering that the body has a very deep knowing of its own. We need to be in the body to access that wisdom. In the West, we tend to live in the mind, not in the body. What I love about shamanic wisdom, such as the work of Credo Mutwa, is that the connection to the land, the body, the ancestral root, is emphasized. If we can learn to listen to the body, by learning to feel deeply, we can become awake to the moment, here and now.

There is a hunger that goes deep into the soul. We despair, and even though we know we're not alone, we feel alone and at times we feel hopeless. I have grown to understand that our dreaming makes a difference. It is still difficult for me to actually believe some of what has happened in the last years, but the truth is that the dreams I was dreaming have come true. There are beings we can't see who care deeply about us. These are dangerous times. If our dreams can help turn this ship around, then we need to be conscious about what we are dreaming. I sometimes feel a great despair about all that Hollywood is pumping into the collective. Those of us who can dream a better dream, a kinder dream, should get to it.

When I was with Mutwa this year, asking him for clarity on all that is happening, he listened and listened, and then he started to laugh, "You Western people! You want to understand everything. Some things you cannot understand. You can only sit in wonder. There are things that happened to me as a boy that I am only now beginning to understand, and there are things that, to this day, are a complete and absolute mystery."

Our culture is so male dominated that it's all about what you can understand, see, explain, or know. So we don't have the ability to sit for any length of time in a state of not knowing. We cannot tolerate the suspense of what's going to be on the next page. We put ourselves through incredible anxiety trying to figure out what we're supposed to know. We don't understand the value of process. We have to learn to love the process.

CG: Your mother died recently. Do you feel her presence?

AM: I do. Whether it is my wishing that she be still with me, or whether I am actually feeling her presence from beyond the veil, how can I be sure? But I now understand why so many cultures in the world value ancestral worship. My very cellular structure is not me at all. It is not personal. My urges and gifts and limitations in this body belong to the genetic tree from which I have grown. I am the fruit of a long lineage.

Perhaps our very desires and hungers are the unresolved urges of our ancestors. I am my mother as much as I am my father. I need to embrace them

continued on p. 33

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Margaret Wheatley is recognized as one of North America's leading thinkers on community development, leadership and organizational management. Her work appears in award-winning books such as Leadership and the New Science, A Simpler Way *and* Turning to One Another. *Her most recent book is entitled* Finding Our Way: Leadership for an Uncertain Time.

Wheatley presents the keynote talk Whatever the Question, Community Is the Answer *at the Haven Institute's Third International Symposium. This year's theme is C-ING the Future – Caring, Chaos, Connection, April 7, 7:30 pm, Hyatt Regency, Vancouver. For symposium details, contact the Haven Institute, 877-247-9238, ext. 234. www.margaretwheatley.com*

Community
The promise and paradox

by Margaret J. Wheatley and Myron Kellner-Rogers

We human beings have a great need of one another. As West African writer and teacher Malidoma Some notes, we have "an instinct of community." However, this instinct is now materializing as growing fragmentation and separation. We experience increasing ethnic wars, militia groups, specialized interest clubs and chat rooms. We use the instinct of community to separate and protect us from one another, rather than to create a global culture of diverse, yet interwoven, communities. Clearly, we cannot get to a future worth inhabiting through these separating paths. Our great task is to rethink our understanding of community so that we can embrace the planetary community.

It is ironic that we live surrounded by communities that know how to connect to others and succeed in creating sustainable relationships over long periods of time. These communities are the webs of relationships called ecosystems. Everywhere in nature, communities of diverse individuals live together in ways that support both the individual and the entire system. As they spin these systems into existence, new capabilities and talents emerge from the process of being together. These systems teach that the instinct of community is not peculiar to humans, but is found everywhere in life, from microbes to the most complex species. They also teach that the way in which individuals weave themselves into ecosystems is paradoxical. This paradox can be a great teacher to us.

Life takes form as individuals that immediately reach out to create systems of relationships. These individuals and systems arise from two seemingly conflicting forces: the absolute need for individual freedom and the unequivocal need for relationships. In human society, we struggle with the tension between these two forces. But in nature, successful examples of this paradox abound and reveal surprising treasures of insight. It is possible to create resilient and adaptive communities that welcome our diversity as well as our membership.

Life's first imperative is that it must be free to create itself.

One biological definition of life is that something is alive if it has the capacity to create itself. Life begins with this primal freedom to create, the capacity for self-determination. An individual creates itself with a boundary that distinguishes it from others. This freedom gives rise to the boundless diversity of the planet and is so much a part of life that Chilean biologists Humberto Maturana and Francisco Varela advise that we can never direct a living system; we can only hope to get its attention. Life accepts only partners, not bosses, because self-determination is its very root of being.

Life's second great imperative propels individuals to search for community. Life is systems-seeking; there is the need to be in relationship, to be connected to others. Biologist Lynn Margulis notes that independence is not a concept that explains the living world. It is only a political concept we've invented. Individuals cannot survive alone. They move out continuously to discover which relationships they require and which relationships are possible. Evolution progresses from these new relationships, not from the harsh and lonely dynamics of survival of the fittest. Species that decide to ignore relationships, that act in greedy and rapacious ways, simply die off. If we look at the evolutionary record, it is cooperation that increases over time. Only in relationship can one fully be one's self. The instinct of community is everywhere in life.

As systems form, the paradox of individualism and connectedness becomes clearer. Individuals are figuring out how to be together. They do not act from a blinding instinct for self-preservation. Nor do they act as passive recipients of someone else's demands. They are never forced to change, but as they choose to change, the "other" is a major influence on their individual decisions. As a system forms from such co-evolutionary processes, the new system provides a level of stability and protection that was not available when individuals were isolated. Members develop new talents and abilities as they work out relationships with others. Both individuals and systems grow in skill and complexity. The very idea of boundaries changes profoundly. Rather than being a self-protective wall, boundaries become the place of meeting and exchange.

Human communities are no different than the rest of life. We form our communities from the need for self-determination and the need for one another. However, in modern society, we have difficulty embracing this inherent paradox. We reach to satisfy one at the expense of the other. Very often, the price of belonging to a community is the forfeiting of one's autonomy. Communities form around specific standards, doctrines and traditions. Instead of honouring the individual as a unique contributor to the community, as is common among indigenous peoples, individuals are required to conform, obey and serve "the greater good" of the community. But inclusion exacts a high price: our individual self-expression. With the loss of personal autonomy, diversity not only disappears, it also becomes a major management problem. The community spends more and more energy on new ways to exert control over individuals.

The price that communities pay for this conformity is exhausting, and for its members, literally deadly. In seeking to be a community member, we cannot truly abandon our need for self-expression. In the most restrictive communities, our need for freedom creeps in around the edges, or moves us out of the community altogether. We modify our look and clothing, create cliques that support our particular manner of being, form splinter groups, disagree over doctrine, create warring schisms, or we leave. These behaviours demonstrate the unstoppable need for self-creation, even while we crave the support of others.

Particularly in the West, we move toward isolationism in order to defend our individual freedom. We choose a life lived alone and give up the meaningful life that can only be discovered in relationship. An African proverb says, "Alone, I have seen many marvellous things, none of which are true." What we can see from our pursuit of loneliness is the terrible price exacted for such independence. We end up in deep, vacant places, overwhelmed by loneliness and the emptiness of life. It seems that whenever we bargain with life and seek to satisfy only one of its two great needs, the result is a quality of true lifelessness. We must live within

the paradox; life does not allow us to choose sides. Our communities must support our individual freedom and individuals must acknowledge their neighbours and make choices based on the desire to be in relationship with them.

At first glance, the world wide web seems to be a source of new communities. But these groups do not embrace the paradox of community. The great potential of a world connected electronically is being used to create stronger boundaries that keep us isolated. We are responding to our instinct of community, but we form highly specialized groups in the image of ourselves, groups that reinforce our separateness from the rest of society. We are not asked to contribute our uniqueness, only our sameness. We are not asked to encounter, much less celebrate the fact that we need one another's gifts. We can turn off our computers the moment we're confronted with the discomfort of diversity. Such specialized, self-reflecting networks lead to as much destructiveness of the individual as any dictatorial, doctrine-based organization.

In human communities, freedom and connectedness are kept vibrant by people focussing on what's going on in the heart of the community, rather than being fixated on the community's forms and structures. What called us together? What did we believe was possible together that was not possible alone? These questions invite both our individuality and our desire for relationships. If we stay with these questions and don't try to structure relationships through policies and doctrines, we can create communities that thrive in the paradox.

In our own work, we have seen these communities in schools, towns and organizations. They create themselves around a shared intent and some basic principles about how to be together. They do not get into a prescriptive role with one another. They are not founded on directives, but on desire. The people know why they are together and they have agreed on the conditions of how to be together. And, very importantly, these conditions are kept to a minimum.

One of the most heartening examples we've encountered is a junior high school, whose students, faculty and staff agree that all behaviours and decisions are based on only three rules: 1) Take care of yourself. 2) Take care of each other. 3) Take care of this place. These rules are sufficient to keep them connected and focussed and open enough to allow for diverse and individual responses to any situation. (The fact that this worked so well in a junior high environment should make us all sit up and take notice!) The principal reported that after the building had to be evacuated during a rainstorm, he later entered the building alone and was greeted by 800 pairs of shoes in the lobby. The children had decided, in that particular circumstance, how to "take care of this place."

We have also seen businesses and large cities rally around a renewed and clear sense of collective purpose. A chemical plant becomes clear that it wants to contribute to the safety of the globe by its safe manufacturing processes; a city determines that it wants to be a place where children can thrive. This clarity helps every individual exercise his/her freedom to decide how best to contribute to this deeply shared purpose. Diversity and unique gifts become a contribution, rather than an issue of compliance or deviance. Problems of diversity disappear as we focus on contribution to a shared purpose, rather than on the legislation of correct behaviour.

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Other problematic behaviours also disappear when a community knows its heart, its purpose for being together. The manager of the chemical plant said that he no longer knew where his plant boundaries were, and that it was unimportant to try and define them. Instead, the plant was in more and more relationships with people in the community, the government, suppliers, foreign competitors, churches and school children, all who contributed to the workers' desire to become one of the safest and highest quality plants in the world, a desire which they achieved.

Today, so many of our communities and the institutions that serve them are lost because they lack clarity about why they are together. Few schools know what the community wants of them; the same is true for healthcare and the government. We no longer agree on what we want these institutions to provide, because we no longer are members of communities that know why they are together. Most of us don't feel like we are members of a community; we just live or work next to each other. The great missing conversation is about why and how we might be together.

But as lost as we are, there is great hope. Even in our fractured communities, increasingly, people are in conversation, asking, "Who are we?" and "What matters?" The problem is

continued on p. 32

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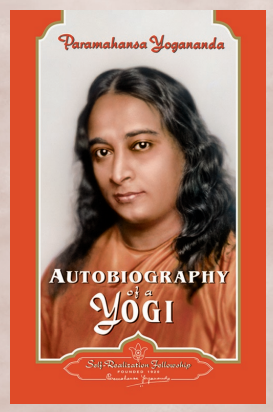

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Glimpse the timeless

THE POWER OF NOW • *ECKHART TOLLE*

When we talked about the eternal present and the unreality of past and future, I found myself looking at that tree outside the window. I had looked at it a few times before, but this time it was different. The external perception had not changed much, except that the colours seemed brighter and more vibrant. But there was now an added dimension, which is hard to explain. I don't know how, but I was aware of something invisible that I felt was the essence of that tree, its inner spirit, if you like. And somehow I was part of that. I realize now that I hadn't truly seen the tree before, just a flat and dead image of it.

When I look at the tree now, the experience is already receding into the past. Can something like this ever be more than a fleeting glimpse?

You were free of time for a moment. You moved into the Now and therefore perceived the tree without the screen of mind. With the timeless dimension comes a different kind of knowing, one that does not "kill" the spirit that lives within every creature and every thing. A knowing that does not destroy the sacredness and mystery of life, but contains a deep love and reverence for all that is. A knowing of which the mind knows nothing.

The mind cannot know the tree. It can only know facts or information about the tree. My mind cannot know you, only labels, judgments, facts and opinions about you. Being, alone, knows directly.

There is a place for mind and mind knowledge. It is in the practical realm of day-to-day living. However, when it takes over all aspects of your life, including your relationships with other human beings and with nature, it becomes a monstrous parasite. You have had a glimpse of how the timeless can transform your perceptions. But an experience is not enough, no matter how beautiful or profound. What is needed is a permanent shift in consciousness.

So break the old pattern of present moment denial and present moment resistance. Make it your practice to withdraw attention from past and future whenever they are not needed. Step out of the time dimension as much as possible in everyday life. If you find it hard to enter the Now directly, start by observing the habitual tendency of your mind to want to escape from the Now. You will observe that the future is usually imagined as either better or worse than the present. If the imagined future is better, it gives you hope or pleasurable anticipation. If it is worse, it creates anxiety. Both are illusory. Through self-observation, more presence comes into your life automatically. The moment you realize you are not present, you are present. Whenever you are able to observe your mind, you are no longer trapped in it. Another factor has come in, something that is not of the mind: the witnessing presence.

Be present as the watcher of your mind, of your thoughts and emotions as well as your reactions in various situations. Be at least as interested in your reactions as in the situation or person that causes you to react. Notice also how often your attention is in the past or future. Don't judge or analyze what you observe. Watch the thought, feel the emotion, observe the reaction. Don't make it a personal problem. You will then feel something more powerful than any of those things that you observe: the still, observing presence behind the content of your mind, the silent watcher.

Intense presence is needed when certain situations trigger a reaction with a strong emotional charge, such as when your self-image is threatened, a challenge comes into your life that triggers fear, things "go wrong," or an emotional complex from the past arises.

In those instances, the tendency is for you to become "unconscious." The reaction or emotion takes you over; you "become" it. You act it out. You justify, make wrong, attack, defend – except that it isn't you, it's the reactive pattern, the mind in its habitual survival mode.

Identification with the mind gives it more energy; observation of the mind withdraws energy from it. Identification with the mind creates more time; observation of the mind opens up the dimension of the timeless. The energy that is withdrawn from the mind turns into presence.

Once you can feel what it means to be present, it becomes much easier to simply choose to step out of the time dimension whenever time is not needed for practical purposes and move more deeply into the Now.

This does not impair your ability to use time – past or future – when you need to refer to it for practical matters. Nor does it impair your ability to use your mind. In fact, it enhances it. When you do use your mind, it will be sharper, more focused.

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Finding true love

UNIVERSE WITHIN • *GWEN RANDALL-YOUNG*

SPIRITUALITY

What is the ideal loving relationship? Many people are searching for Mr. or Ms. Right or questioning their current relationship. It is relatively easy to imagine all the qualities one might want in a "perfect" partner or to compare a current partner to an ideal standard.

Certainly, we all have some parameters when we think of a mate, however, the truth is that the quality of the relationship is not so much about the quality of the two individuals as it is about the quality of the way they treat one another.

Finding true love is not a matter of finding the perfect mate, but more about being ready and willing to *give* true love. What is true love? It is not "falling in love." It is what we do in the days, weeks, months and years afterward. It is all the things described in *Corinthians*: it is patient and kind. It does not envy. It is not proud, rude, self-seeking or easily angered. It keeps no record of wrongs and does not delight in evil, but rather rejoices in truth. It always protects, trusts, hopes and perseveres. Truly, that says it all.

Finding true love is not a matter of finding the perfect mate, but more about being ready and willing to give true love. It is not "falling in love."

To really love another is to be loving towards that being. Saying, "I love you" often means "I want you" or "I like having you in my life," more than it is a statement about actively loving the other.

Active loving means being as concerned for the well being of the other as for our own. It means getting our ego out of the way, so that we are not needy, controlling, judgmental or demanding. Actively loving another means we are neither critical nor hurtful. We are as careful around the feelings of our partner as we would be if there were a small kitten underfoot. We will go out of our way to ensure that our words and actions are not harmful, even inadvertently.

It goes even deeper than this. Truly loving another means that we do not even *think* negative thoughts about the person. Everyone has aspects of their being that could be judged or criticized, but when we commit to loving another, we commit to holding only the purest thoughts about that person. This is so very important, because if we hold negative thoughts about someone, even if we do not utter them aloud, they will know.

Holding pure thoughts of our beloved is the most powerful nutrient we can add to the garden of our love. It provides a safe and positive environment in which our loved one can blossom. The more that we create this for one another, the more beautiful and bountiful our garden.

Criticism and judgment are like hail stones that come crashing down, damaging the tender plants. Similarly, angry words and harsh actions are like strong winds that cause breakage and weakening. Non-communication or days of silence are like winter frosts, stopping the flow of life. Dishonesty and infidelity are like diseases that slowly disfigure and eventually kill the blossom, if not the whole plant.

How often it happens that each partner in a couple brings negativity into the relationship, but then blames the other person when the relationship does not flourish. How ironic that some will try to "fix" the relationship by pointing out the defects of the partner. You cannot fix a relationship by bringing pain to your partner.

We can think of two partners as mirrors. If one starts to reflect negativity, it will be reflected back, often increasing in intensity and gaining momentum with each reflection. If each reflects unconditional love and acceptance towards the other, it is like a hall of mirrors with endless reflections of love.

Truly loving another means only seeing the good and reflecting that back to him or her. This applies to our children, as well as our partners. Ultimately, it also applies to every human being. This is what it is to be a loving being.

Maybe that is what relationships are for: the opportunity to practise growing in love, even when we are challenged, tired, irritable or cranky. It could be the highest purpose, with the greatest reward.

Gwen Randall-Young is an author and psychotherapist in private practice. For more articles and information about her books and CDs, visit www.gwen.ca (See display ad this issue.)

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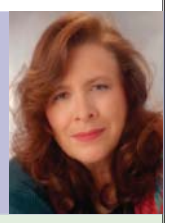

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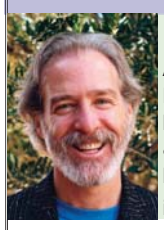

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Vegetarian diplomacy

NUTRISPEAK • *VESANTO MELINA MS, RD*

In the supermarket, as I pass a tasting booth with a woman giving out chicken samples, I say with an insincere smile, "No thanks, I don't eat slaughterhouse products." Or, at least, that's what my evil twin says.

It's a dilemma. When I see those bits of chicken, I also see the de-beaking process. I recall the worker grabbing the legs of three struggling chickens with each of his hands. I hear fragile chicken leg bones breaking as a result of their forced and speedy growth to a "marketable" size. I recall the endless conveyer belt at the chicken slaughterhouse on Franklin Street near Commercial Drive that takes both "free range" and the even less free chickens to their painful end.

It is the diplomatic solution that is likely to maintain bridges, rather than creating barriers with those I love.

Yet I suspect that my "shock value" response to the woman at the supermarket does little good for her, for me, or for the unfortunate beings that we classify as "food animals." My response is ineffective because its root is righteousness. I fling my righteousness across the supermarket aisle. It's not unusual for me to later discover that the person I scorned as "less vegan than me" is extremely compassionate and that she gives to children in ways that would never have occurred to me. Or that her environmental awareness and activism are exceptional. Or that her kindness extends to a large family, and beyond.

Thus, my less evil twin remembers the Dalai Lama and simply says a truly warm and friendly, "No thanks, I'm vegetarian," as I pass the sampling booth.

Fortunately, my son Chris, along with several good friends, helps me keep my righteousness in line. Like many families, mine has mixed dietary preferences. My daughter was vegetarian before I was. Chris, while sympathetic, has never become vegetarian but is, in many ways, one of the most ethical people I know. I recall family dinners at which several would dine at the vegetarian restaurant at Broadway and Trafalgar and one of us would get a burger nearby and join us later for dessert. Over the years, my family members watched each other's choices, took note, allowed for differences and gradually learned from each other.

The combination of respect for my own values and for the people around me offers the most promise for maintaining outward and inner peace. It is the diplomatic solution that is likely to maintain bridges, rather than creating barriers with those I love.

While my family grew, with each member evolving in his or her own way, my dietary preferences gradually shifted from meat-eater, to lacto-ovo-vegetarian, to vegan. If I am to respect others, as well as myself 30-years-ago, I must come to terms with all these choices.

In practical terms, how was this expressed at the dinner table? For years, the following four standbys provided us with teen-friendly food on a regular basis:

Tacos – The basics are acceptable to everyone and happen to be vegan: tortillas, mashed avocado, lettuce, chopped tomato, taco sauce and seasoned pinto beans. Corn tortillas are welcome for those with wheat allergies. Grated cheese and seasoned meat are optional. Tacos allow people to create their own combination.

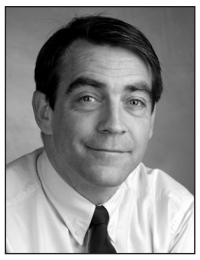
Pizza – Our childhood birthday celebrations have often been "create-your-own pizza" parties. Pizza dough, tomato sauce, sliced mushrooms, tomatoes, green and red pepper, olives, veggie pepperoni and pineapple are vegan basics. Some partygoers have elected cheese or salami as toppings.

Spaghetti – Spaghetti can be served with optional tomato or meat sauce and parmesan on the side.

Burgers and hot dogs – The combination of a veggie burger or dog in a whole grain bun is a surprisingly healthful choice, offered with a selection of toppings such as mustard, ketchup, barbecue sauce, relish, chili sauce, tomato slices, dill pickles, onion, avocado slices, lettuce, sprouts and a tasty mayo such as Nayonnaise. Meat eaters can have their patty along with the full spectrum of vegetarian fixin's.

Over time, both my recipe collection and cooking skills improved. My family and friends, including those who are not vegetarian, have come to trust that my plant-based offerings will taste good. The marketplace increasingly supports vegetarian choices. And I'm gradually learning to let go of righteousness.

Vesanto Melina, registered dietitian, has authored a number of food and nutrition classics (Becoming Vegetarian, Becoming Vegan *and* Raising Vegetarian Children), *which feature powerful sections on dealing with our dietary differences. To book a personal nutritional consultation, call her home office at 604-882-6782. www.nutrispeak.com*



Sleeping pill war will keep you awake

DRUG BUST • *ALAN CASSELS*

HEALTH

While it may surprise some *Common Ground* readers that I'm an ex-military officer, it shouldn't come as a surprise then that I recently woke up at three in the morning with the chilling words "collateral damage" ringing in my cranium.

This is standard-issue, military techno-speak, and a term that you'd hear in a bunker along with "friendly fire" or "soft targets." It refers to those unfortunate souls who happened to get killed or maimed, not by something they did, but because they happened to live close to something someone thought was a good target.

The reason this term came to me, flinging my eyelids open at zero-dark-three-zero in the morning, is because it dawned on me that south of the border, Big Pharma is in the midst of a drug war over the market for its newest sleeping pills. And more of us unsuspecting and occasional insomniacs are going to get hit with shrapnel as the battles are waged with increasing ferocity.

Let's take a closer look at who funds the insomniac propaganda. A little digging uncovers groups like the American Academy of Sleep Medicine and the National Sleep Foundation.

The war in question is between three rival companies, launching missions for new patients for sleeping pills. One astute financial analyst thoughtfully tells us this is going to "… drive the $3.8 billion insomnia market to new heights." Okay. That kind of language snapped my synapses wide open.

Ambien, (*zolpidem tartrate*) the market leader, holds the high ground, selling like hotcakes under the premise that it is "safer" and not dangerously addictive like the older benzodiazepine drugs. Those drugs have had such bad press, because, how can I say this politely, some docs think they're as addictive as crack cocaine.

With a comfortably wide niche in the market, Ambien has been a stalwart in this war for more than 12 years, accounting for more than 70 percent of the sleeping pills ingested nightly by American insomniacs. Yet, sensing that its high ground was under assault, Ambien's maker, Sanofi-Synthelabo, recently invested more than $50 million in direct-to-consumer, TV and print advertising, proclaiming its overwhelming firepower and threatening any competition with the gonads to take it on.

Two upstarts, however, have appeared on the battlefield: Lunesta, (*eszopiclone*) marketed by Sepracor and Sonata (*zaleplon*), produced by King Pharmaceuticals. Lunesta's niche is that it'll be the one for people – I guess, like myself – who "wake up too early." Imagine that! A sleeping pill that doesn't actually put you to sleep but is intended to keep you there. We're hoping its effects wear off before you have to drive to work.

Sonata does the opposite. One ad reads, "If you're still awake, it's not too late for Sonata," and goes on to claim that "Sonata is best for busy patients, who don't have time to sleep eight hours a night, yet turn in late."

Now that's a new twist: a sleeping pill that zaps you to sleep as soon as you've decided that the late night talk shows are a bit too lame and you need to slam in a few ZZZs before that big, important meeting the next day.

Now, I'm not saying that some people, some of the time, won't benefit from being chemically induced to enter dreamland. That's what those drugs should do, but only in emergencies, and only very, very, occasionally. Yet most of us live nowhere near the blast range of a serious sleeping problem. The question of their addictive nature, however, is still open to question, with some doctors saying it's "same old, same old" with the new drugs. That's right: Crack.

The key warhead being used to try to convince more and more of us that we suck at sleep and could use some convenient pharmaceutical enhancement is none other than the handy little self-diagnostic test.

Take this handy little sleep IQ quiz:

Do you watch the late show because you can't fall asleep?

Are you often cranky?

Do you eat spicy foods for dinner?

Do you experience a lot of stress in your life?

And so on.

continued on p. 32

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It's seedling season

ON THE GARDEN PATH • *CAROLYN HERRIOT*

Each month, Carolyn writes about what she is doing in the garden, the orchard, the greenhouse, with seed saving and soil building, with the intention of helping gardeners of all levels realize they can have the most healthy, productive, and beautiful garden without resorting to substances harmful to humans, pets, wildlife, plants, or the myriad of soil-dwelling organisms.

ORGANICS

If you have started plants from seed, you should have lots of seedlings to take care of now. The first set of seed leaves are called cotyledons; at this stage, roots are not developed enough, so do not disturb the seedling. It is not until seedlings develop their first set of true leaves that they can be moved into their own pots, a process called pricking-out.

When pricking-out, handle delicate seedlings carefully – ideally, by their leaves – rather than by their fragile stems; it's easy to snap a stem when handling. Use a dibber or a chopstick to make a hole in the pre-moistened medium and place the seedling into it. Carefully cover the roots and then water. The seedling is now in transplant shock, and needs to be kept out of direct sun for a few days until it recovers. In sun, it will wilt immediately and may never recover.

Keep seedlings evenly moist, and don't let them dry out completely. Watering in the morning is best, so seedlings don't sit cool and wet all night. This could trigger a fungal problem called damping-off, which is caused by soil-borne fungi, usually *Rhizoctonia,* occasionally *Pythium* and less often *Botrytis* or *Phytophthora.*

Seedlings put out a lot of new growth at this stage, so after three or four waterings, start to fertilize weekly with liquid fish fertilizer or liquid seaweed. Once their roots have established, periodically check that your plants have not become root-bound. Then either pot each plant into a larger pot, or harden it off to prepare it for transplanting outdoors.

Problems?

If seeds have not sprouted, they may not be viable. Check the date on the seed package. Do a viability test by sowing 10 seeds on a dampened piece of paper towel. Fold it over. Keep it damp. Check a week or so later to see how many seeds have sprouted. Three out of 10 indicates only a 30 percent germination rate. In this case, I would recommend buying a fresh packet of seeds. A germination rate of no less than 65 percent indicates acceptable viability.

If there is no sprouting, the seed may require a longer period to germinate. Sometimes, seeds take from four to six weeks. Parsley requires 21 days for germination. Check a germination guide before you give up on your pots of seeds.

If seeds are taking a long time to germinate, the temperature may be too cold. For heat lovers, such as peppers, basil and tomatoes, which require temperatures around 75-85°F (25-30°C) for germination, put seed trays on top of bottom heat, or just wait for warmer weather.

When seedlings are yellow, it's an indicator that they are starving due to lack of nutrients in the growing medium. Apply a weekly liquid feed of fish fertilizer or liquid seaweed.

If seedlings are spindly and leggy, there's not enough light. Increase the light by moving the pots closer to a bright window or use grow lights. Rotating seedlings daily helps them straighten up, or you can try planting spindly seedlings deeper.

If seedlings are growing very slowly, it may be due to overcrowding, or the growing medium may have insufficient nutrients to supply all the seedlings. Try to prevent overcrowding by sowing seeds less thickly. If possible, transplant seedlings into individual pots to relieve this stress, and then apply a foliar feed of liquid fish fertilizer or liquid seaweed.

If seedlings collapse at soil level, it is an indication of damping-off. Damping-off is aggravated by overseeding in warm, moist conditions.

If seedlings are being eaten, you've got a critter in the area. Check for slugs or sowbugs that love munching on tasty new seedlings. Check between and under the pots and trays, and find the culprit before it dines on all your plants.

Excerpted from A Year on the Garden Path: A 52-Week Organic Gardening Guide *by Carolyn Herriot. $29.95. Earthfuture Publications, Victoria, BC. Available at Banyen Books, Duthie Books, or at www.earthfuture.com/gardenpath*

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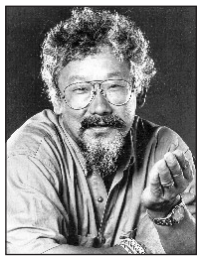

Learning science from President Bush

ENVIRONMENT

SCIENCE MATTERS • *DAVID SUZUKI*

With a new Conservative prime minister in office, there's been plenty of talk about how much Stephen Harper will try to emulate American-style policies. We can only hope that he doesn't follow the Bush administration's confused, and confusing, take on science.

Most people are probably aware of the US government's official position on climate change, which has ranged from, "It isn't happening" to "It may be happening, but it has nothing to do with people" to "Okay, maybe it is happening, but there's nothing we can really do about it." American diplomats even walked out of talks during the December climate negotiations in Montreal, because they simply were not prepared to discuss any plans that would call for future reductions of heat-trapping emissions.

Meanwhile, the prime minister of the country Bush calls "America's closest ally," Britain, recently included the following in the foreword to the new report *Avoiding Dangerous Climate Change*: "The risks of climate change may well be greater than we thought." Blair called the current growth in greenhouse emissions "unsustainable," noting, "Action now can help avert the worst effects of climate change. With foresight, such action can be taken without disturbing our way of life."

But back in the US, the top climate scientist at NASA has accused the Bush administration of trying to silence him. James Hansen says that after he gave a lecture promoting the necessity of reducing heat-trapping greenhouse emissions, the public affairs headquarters at NASA in Washington, DC ordered a review of all his upcoming lectures, papers, Internet postings and interview requests. Dr. Hansen told the *New York Times* that nothing in his 30 years with NASA compares to the scrutiny he now faces in his daily activities.

And he's not the only scientist to complain about the Bush administration's unofficial policies of censorship. The Union of Concerned Scientists has gathered a list of more than 8,000 researchers asking the White House to stop politicizing their disciplines. A preface to the list claims, "Across a broad range of issues

continued on p. 32

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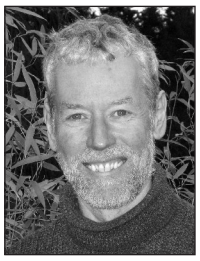

One Day in Vancouver

EARTHFUTURE.COM • *GUY DAUNCEY*

One day, Vancouver will be the cleanest, greenest, healthiest city in the world. Poets will wander safely down the middle of Robson Street and pedestrians will sit and listen to them speak.

One day, the waters of Burrard Inlet will be pure and people will fish and raise shellfish there.

One day, every rooftop in Vancouver will boast a solar hot water heater and solar PV shingles.

One day, Cambie Street will have two lanes for cars and four for bicycles, so that the faster cyclists can overtake the slower ones. Red-tailed hawks will nest in the rooftops above Georgia Street.

One day, far fewer people will own cars. Many will be members of Vancouver's Cooperative Auto Network, and use a car only when they need to. Most cars will be electric; the rest will be bio-fueled plug-in hybrids that run on electricity for most local trips.

One day, Vancouver will be powered by the wind and the tides, as well as the big dams, and every new home will produce its own energy from the sun, wind or earth. No one will burn coal, oil or gas any more, unless people capture and store the carbon.

One day, we will raise the dikes around Richmond, Delta and Surrey to keep out the rising ocean, but we will have learned our lesson.

One day, each fall, there will be a citywide celebration of food and farmers. On every street, neighbours and friends will bring tables and feast on locally grown organic food, with music, dancing, locally brewed ale and mulled herb punch.

One day, 16 and 17-year-olds will also have the vote, and we will celebrate each election as a festival of vision and ideas, not a boring rehashing of old promises and clichés.

One day, every street will be like a small village. We will chat together, play together and take care of each other's children. When people are house hunting, they will ask, "Is this a warm street, where people care for each other?" The delight of each community will be its diversity and the ethnic, sexual and religious differences of its people.

The One Day Campaign is the City of Vancouver's way to encourage people to get behind its Climate Change Action Plan.

One day, there will be no more poverty. Every citizen of Vancouver will believe in herself or himself, and people will support each other as they walk, run and fly toward their dreams. Community banks will help them build sustainable local economies, and encouragement centres will help them fulfill their dreams.

One day, all of Vancouver will share in a community resources exchange; everything will be re-used or recycled, and there will be no more garbage. People will be shocked to think there was once a time when we trucked our waste to giant garbage heaps, far from the city.

One day, there will be almost no flying. Instead, there will be giant screens where people can touch hands, lips and hearts across the world.

One day, tree frogs will sing each night in February in the wetlands that have been created to gather storm water and treat local sewage.

One day, not a single pesticide will be used in this city. In the fall, people will gather their leaves and spread them on their gardens, thinking, "This will help my vegetables grow."

One day, there will be no more cancer, Alzheimer's or asthma. Toxic products and toxic air will both have disappeared, and people will protect their bodies with organic food and healthy habits.

One day, Vancouver's churches and temples will welcome people of all faiths, to worship or meditate in whatever way they choose.

One day, with the gasoline and diesel-powered vehicles gone, silence will return to the streets. We will wonder at the joy of it.

One day, we will switch off all the night lights, and the sky will be truly dark again. We will sit on our rooftops on warm summer nights and gaze at the infinite universe.

One day, the aliens will arrive, and they will smile at us, thinking, "At last, they have become civilized." We will smile back and stop calling them aliens.

One day, every day will be filled with purpose and hope.

One day, if we take it one step at a time, all this can be ours.

One day, in Vancouver.

Guy Dauncey is president of the BC Sustainable Energy Association (www.bcsea.org), publisher of EcoNews, *and author of* Stormy Weather: 101 Solutions to Global Climate Change. *www.earthfuture.com. For more on the One Day Campaign, visit www.onedayvancouver.ca and www.30daysofsustainability.com.*

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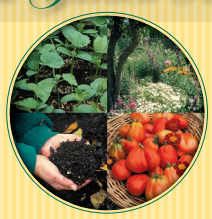

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By 2025, worldwide demand for water will outstrip supply of water by an estimated 56 percent... The twin realities of growing freshwater shortages combined with deeply inequitable access pose the greatest ecological and human rights threats of our time. The growing number of citizens and groups, of this dream: that the global water crisis will become the source of global peace; that humanity will bow before nature and learn to cooperate with the limits that nature gives us and with each other.

– Maude Barlow and Tony Clarke, recipients of the Right Livelihood Award, 2005

Many of the wars of this [20th] century were about oil, but the wars of the next century will be about water.

– Ismail Serageldin, vice president of the World Bank

Wise Water Warriors

World Water Day – March 22

HABITAT · *HADAS LEVY*

In 1992, the UN established March 22 as World Water Day. Since then, millions of people worldwide have celebrated the day with a strong message that water belongs to the planet and its inhabitants.

The World Water Council, established in 1996, hosts a World Water Forum every three years, on and around World Water Day. At the 2003 Forum, Water Warriors demonstrated against the profiteering attitude of the Council and its plans for privatization. Water is vital to people's health and livelihoods. In Canada, there is no national strategy to address urgent water issues and no federal leadership to conserve and protect our water. The Federal Water Policy is more than 20 years old and badly outdated. There is a growing list of crises facing our fresh water, including contamination, shortages and pressure to export water to the US through pipelines and diversions.

Communities across the country are in desperate need of money to pay for water pipes and filtration systems, which are now the responsibility of municipal governments. These governments are now looking to private investors to rebuild infrastructure through public-private partnerships (P3s). Water is a public health and safety concern and is best managed, regulated and financed by public systems that are accountable to the community. When for-profit interests control drinking water, quality decreases and cost increases.

In preparation for the upcoming World Water Forum in Mexico (March 16-22), campaigners from around the globe are demanding that water be taken out of free trade agreements and are pushing for the campaign against water privatization to be strengthened. Water activists are also calling for the abolition of the International Centre for the Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID), which ruled this year that the US multinational Bechtel could sue Bolivia for its ousting during the popular revolt against the privatization of water services in the city of Cochabamba. *www.democracyctr.org/waterwar*

World Water Day 2006 provides many opportunities for continuing to counter international and local water privatization initiatives. See www.canadians.org for some interesting diversion and privatization facts. Some Canadians will be heading to Mexico City, while those staying at home are encouraged to participate in their own communities. For events in your community, visit www.blueplanetproject.net.

The Vancouver chapter of the Council of Canadians sponsors a free World Water Day event, Wednesday, March 22, 7 pm. The event includes a film screening of *Thirst* and a panel discussion about local and international water issues. Unitarian Church, 949 West 49th (at Oak), 604-263-1005.

Hadas Levy is a programmer for the upcoming screening of Reflections on Water *taking place during Vancouver's World Peace Forum in June. E-mail levhadas@yahoo.com.*

International Women's Day

Quest for equality celebrated worldwide

International Women's Day on March 8 is an occasion marked by women's groups around the world, commemorated at the UN and designated in many countries as a national holiday. When women on all continents come together to celebrate their day, they can look back to a tradition that represents at least nine decades of struggle.

International Women's Day is rooted in the centuries-old struggle of women to participate in society on an equal footing with men. In ancient Greece, Lysistrata initiated a sexual strike against men in order to end war; during the French Revolution, Parisian women calling for "liberty, equality, fraternity" marched on Versailles to demand women's suffrage. The idea of an International Women's Day first arose at the turn of the century.

Chronology

1909

In accordance with a declaration by the Socialist Party of America, the first National Woman's Day was observed across the US on February 28. Women continued to celebrate it on the last Sunday of that month until 1913.

1910

The Socialist International, meeting in Copenhagen, established a Women's Day, international in character, to honour the movement for women's rights and to assist in achieving universal suffrage for women. The proposal was greeted with unanimous approval by more than 100 women from 17 countries.

1911

As a result of the decision at Copenhagen the previous year, International Women's Day was marked for the first time (March 19) in Austria, Denmark, Germany and Switzerland.

1913-1914

As part of the peace movement brewing on the eve of World War One, Russian women observed their first International Women's Day on the last Sunday in February 1913.

1917

With two million Russian soldiers dead in the war, Russian women again chose the last Sunday in February to strike for "bread and peace."

Four days later, the Czar was forced to abdicate and the provisional government granted women the right to vote.

Since those early years, the growing international women's movement, which has been strengthened by four global UN women's conferences, has helped make the commemoration a rallying point for coordinated efforts to demand women's rights and participation in the political and economic process.

The UN's Role

Few causes promoted by the UN have generated more intense and widespread support than the campaign to promote and protect the equal rights of women. The Charter of the United Nations, signed in San Francisco in 1945, was the first international agreement to proclaim gender equality as a fundamental human right. Since then, the organization has helped create a

continued on p. 33

Vancouver events honour Women's Day

Outstanding In Her Field – March 8
FarmFolk/CityFolk Society and Pro Organics present the award-winning film *Outstanding In Her Field* and spotlight six women leading the way in the organic industry. 7-9 pm, WISE Hall, 1882 Adanac Street. $12. Tickets FarmFolk/CityFolk, 604-730-0450 or Kokopelli Hair Design, 604-253-6950.

***Voices For the Frontlines* – March 10**
La Femme Factor presents a benefit concert for HIV/AIDS in Africa featuring Leora Cashe, *Mother of Pearl*, and *The Shirleys*. All proceeds to the Stephen Lewis Foundation allocated to SWAPOL. St. Andrew's-Wesley Church, 1022 Nelson, 8 pm. $25 or $15/students & seniors, $10/children. 604-257-0366. sales@festivalboxoffice.com

Sista'Hood Celebration 2006, March 4-28
The Sista'Hood Celebration is the only event of its kind in Western Canada, featuring local, national and international women performers and media artists. Sista'Hood explores the convergence of women in music, dance, spoken word, media arts and community activism in today's urban environment. Schedule at www.sistahoodcelebration.com

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Globe 2006 focuses on four themes:

- Finance and sustainability
- Corporate sustainability
- Energy and environment
- Building better cities

and includes three exciting plenary sessions:

Corporate sustainability and finance plenary

Leading the sustainable economy, March 29, 8:30-10 am
Globe 2006 opens with a gathering of global leaders from government and industry to share insights on how social and environmental values influence today's sustainable economy. The opening plenary will highlight recent changes in the financial structure of the new sustainable economy and explore how corporations and government are supporting the sustainability revolution.

Energy and environment plenary

Transitioning to a sustainable economy, March 30, 8:30-10 am
Over the coming decade, the transition to alternative energy and energy-efficient technologies for our offices, homes and transportation systems will accelerate. Facing oil wars and economic collapses, many firms are ready to plug into tomorrow's new energy infrastructure today. The question remains: which interim and long-term strategies are forward-looking enterprises adopting?

Urban plenary

Bridging to the UN-Habitat World Urban Forum, March 31, 1:30-3 pm
In recognition of Vancouver's gear-up for the forum this June, this plenary brings together urban leaders shaping our future cities, and also celebrates the social, economic and environmental advances taking place in urban centres around the world.

Globe 2006 is produced by the Globe Foundation of Canada. The conference runs from March 29-31 at the Vancouver Convention & Exhibition Centre. For registration and information, visit www.globe2006.com

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I believe that the time has come for all of us to examine the conclusions that our authors reached, and to come to an understanding of how we can help to effect societal change by changing our own individual outlook. (Books available on the market or at libraries.)

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The problem with neoconservatism's agenda lies not in its ends, which are as American as apple pie, but rather in the overmilitarized means by which it has sought to accomplish them.
– From After Neoconservatism *by Francis Fukuyama*

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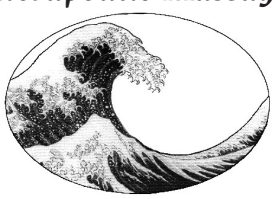

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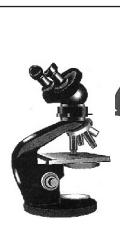

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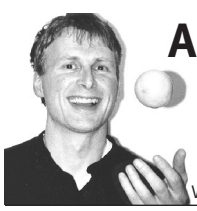

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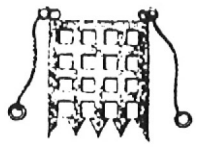

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– Anonymous

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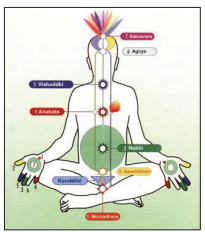

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Mar 08 - Open Circle -Lyn Wells
Mar 15 - Astrology: Upcoming Cycles - Janice Brown
Mar 22 - Are you a "Sensitive"? - Deborah White
Mar 29 - Anniversary of Spiritualism with Mediumship - Ministers of the ISA
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Christian Science – Universal Law of Healing
Speaker: Barbara Vining, CSB (an authorized Christian Science teacher and healer)
Time: Thursday, April 6, 2006 at 7:30 pm
Place: Plaza 500 Hotel (Oak Room)
500 West 12th Avenue at Cambie, Vancouver
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– Sant Darshan Singh Ji Maharaj

DATEBOOK *International Women's Day – March 8*

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Introduction to Foot Reflexology commences Certificate Weekend Course. Intro, $10, Course $295, Pacific Institute of Reflexology, 604-875-8818.

MAR 7, 14, 21 & 28
Transform Your Life Classes: Learn exercises that reduce stress, increase energy & enhance: fitness, weight loss, health, productivity, focus, balanced emotions & relationships. Learn: Qi Gong, Energy Healing Tech., Meditation, EFT (Emotional Freedom Tech.), Self-Hypnosis, Brain-Gym, etc. (7:30-9 pm. FREE computer stress assessment with group. Nicklas: MSW, RCC, 25 yrs. www.ehrlichandassociates.com 604-990-1584.

MAR 9 – APR 8
Ann Mortifee presents *Into the Heart of the Sangoma* with Jenni Burke: World premier, Arts Club Theatre Company, Granville Island Stage. Ticketmaster: 604-280-3311. www.artsclub.com

MAR 10
Voices For The Front Lines Benefit Concert for the Stephen Lewis Foundation, St. Andrews Wesley United Church, (1022 Nelson/Burrard) 8 pm. Tickets $25/$25/$10, info, 604-683-4574, www.festivalboxoffice.com 604-257-0366.

MAR 11
Shamanic Drumming, Chanting & Dreaming Circle: Saturday, Mar 11, 7pm. Experience shamanic journeywork for insight and healing. Vancouver Multi-Cultural Centre, 1254, W. 7th. By donation. Turtle Island Healing Circles. 604-418-9636. www.drumcircles.ca

MAR 12 & APR 9
Anatomy of Yoga Workshops with Leila Stuart: SPINAL MOBILITY: FINDING FLUIDITY: Mar 12, 12-4:00pm. FOUNDATION: SITTING BONE/HEEL CONNECTION: Apr 9, 12-4:00pm. 604-536-7894 or leila-yoga@shaw.ca

MAR 15-19
Rosen Method Movement Workshop is an enjoyable form for exploring and improving flexibility, muscle function and breathing. 9:30 am - 4:30 pm, Sechelt BC. Tuition $550. Housing available. Toll free: 1-877-855-0179, register online www.rosenmethodcanada.com

MAR 17 & 18
Writing: Most Dramatic Moments with Linda Solomon. A supportive workshop session designed to inspire writers at all stages of experience. Mar 17: 6:30-9:30, Mar 18, 9:30-4:30. $135. Call 800-933-6339 or email: registration@hollyhock.ca

MAR 17, 18 & 19
Introduction to Hand Reflexology commences Certificate Weekend Course. Intro, $10, Course $295, Pacific Institute of Reflexology, 604-875-8818.

MAR 18
Global Day of Action: War No More: assemble at Seaforth Park (South end of Burrard Bridge) 11:30 am. Rally at Vancouver Art Gallery, 1 pm. Music, speakers, special guests. www.stopwar.ca

MAR 18
Wolfsong Spring Equinox – Medicine Wheel Celebration: Sat Mar 18, 7 pm. Participate singing shared native sacred healing chants. Featuring drumming, cedar flute, didgeridoo, crystal bowls. At Vancouver Multi-Cultural Centre. By donation. Presented by Turtle Island Healing Circles. 604-418-9636. www.drumcircles.ca

MAR 18
World Storytelling Day 2006, theme MOON STORIES presented by Vancouver storytellers to benefit the Stephen Lewis Foundation, 3-10 pm, Unitarian Church, 49th/Oak. All events pass $20 at VSOS (604-876-2272), Banyen or Highlife Records. www.vancouverstorytelling.org

MAR 19
Growing Light – spring equinox workshop with Ascent magazine columnist Swami Lalitananda. 10:30 am – 4 pm at radha yoga & eatery. $50 includes vegetarian lunch. www.radhavancouver.org (604) 605-0011.

MAR 22
World Water Day Film Screening *Thirst* and Discussion on Local/International Water Issues, Unitarian Church, 949 West 49th (at Oak), 7 pm FREE. Sponsored by Council of Canadians, 604-263-1005.

MAR 29-31
GLOBE 2006 Conference and Trade Fair on the business of the environment. Vancouver Convention & Exhibition Centre. Visit www.globe2006.com for registration and information.

MAR 29 & 30
Grail Movement of Canada presents public lectures by Dr. Gaston Lemieux: Mar 29: "Master Your Own Destiny!" 6:30 pm, West Vancouver Public Library, Peter's Room, 1950 Marine Drive, West Vancouver. Mar 30: "Is Joy Still Possible in Today's World?" 7 pm, Vancouver Public Library, 350 W. Georgia, Peter Kaye Room. $10/door per lecture. 604-925-3531 / 604-990-0524. http://hamilton.typepad.com/grailcirclelectures

APR 1-2
Awakening The Third Eye Workshop: Techniques to awaken the third eye, third eye meditation, night practice, dowsing energy lines, & protection/grounding. www.clairvision.org/aprilates To register for Vancouver, 607-821-1727 or phi@clairvision.org

APR 7 & 8
5 Rhythms Dance with Soasis Sukuweh: Unique body motions allowing full self-expression. Easy-to-learn practice for all bodies! Apr 7, 6:30-9:30; Apr 8, 9:30-4:30. $135. Call 800-933-6339 or email registration@hollyhock.ca

APR 7-8
C-ING the future with Margaret Wheatley: Discovery & possibilities about relationships and community. Co-presented with the Haven Institute faculty. Downtown Vancouver. Fri. keynote, $49. Sat. sessions, $99. Symposium package, $129. Call 877-247-9238 (ext 234) or www.haven.ca

APR 7-9
Introduction to Foot Reflexology commences Certificate Weekend Course. Intro, $10, Course $295, Pacific Institute of Reflexology, 604-875-8818.

APR 9
CDM Psychic Institute welcomes author Mary Ellen Flora (Healing: Key to Spiritual Balance) & her inspiring presentation: Heal Yourself, Heal the World. Learn healing meditation techniques. $25 donation. Meditation: 12:30; Lecture: 2:00. Plaza 500 Hotel, 500 West 12th, Vancouver. 604-730-8788.

APR 14, 15, 16
Satsang with Neelam Meditation and Dialogue ending all seeking and struggle. A tender and definite inquiry into the Truth of who we are. Friday 7:30pm (Suggested $20). Saturday & Sunday 11am – 4pm ($50 - $100). HR MacMillan Space Centre, Vancouver. NO SCENTS PLEASE. 604-254-9150 www.neelam.org

APR 14-17
Easter Celebration Retreat: A silent, spiritual retreat to experience the full spiritual depth of this beautiful time. Includes special Meditation times, nourishing food and comfortable accommodation. SRMH Centre, Sunshine Coast, 1-604-740-0898.

APR 21-22
Ruling Your World Public Talk and Meditation Workshop with Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche, East-West renaissance Lama and director of Shambhala International. Talk $20, 7 pm, Chan Centre; Workshop: $100, Apr 22, 9 am-5 pm. www.mipham.com

APR 27-28
Responding with Respect: A Mental Illness First Aid Course. Open to the public, 6111 Cambie Street (St. John's Ambulance). 9 am-5 pm daily.

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$150/person (+GST). Contact 604-872-4902, ext 290 or mifa@cmhavb.bc.ca for details or to register. www.mifa.ca.

APR 29-30
Intuitive Development Workshop: Intuition really is your sixth sense. Learn to develop your intuitive wisdom/abilities and enhance your life forever. SRMH Centre, Sunshine Coast, 1-604-740-0898.

AUG 4-27
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International Spiritualist Alliance: #1A – 320 Columbia Street, New West (Downstairs) 604-521-6336. Sunday services, 11 am. Rev. Joyce Tarvin, 604-433-6663. See Resource Directory. www.isacanada.ca

TUESDAYS

Pranic Healing Clinics: Non-touch energy healing. By donation. Tuesdays 11 am – 3 pm and 6-9 pm. 2950 Laurel St, Vancouver. Closed last Tuesday of month. 604-988-1102. www.pranichealing.ca/vancouver

Reflexology Student Clinic sessions, only $18. Evenings only. By appointment. Pacific Institute of Reflexology. 604-875-8818.

WEDNESDAYS

Hawaiian Healing Night: 7 pm. Hawaiian guided meditation, Sharing the Aloha and snacks afterward. Meet like-minded people and share. $5 donation. At Hale Ola, a place of Healing, 1215 Madison Ave., Burnaby. 604-431-7474, Kaimana and Moanikeala.

Meditation & Self-inquiry: Have you lost the balance and rhythm in your life? Let stillness (through self-inquiry) return your wholeness. 5-7 pm. 604-317-1613.

Children of War fundraiser: Chai Gallery at East is East hosts a fundraiser for Children of War (www.thechildrenofwar.org) featuring local musicians & traditional dancers. Every Wed. evening, 7:30 pm – 1:30 am, 3243 W. Broadway. Tickets at door or call 778-837-1862. By donation.

THURSDAYS

Pranic Healing Clinic: Non-touch energy healing. By donation. West Vancouver United Church, 2062 Esquimalt Ave. Thursdays 10 am – 2 pm. Closed last Thursday of month. 604-988-1102. www.pranichealing.ca/vancouver

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On track zodiac

MARCH 2006 • *ILONA HEDI GRANIK*

ARIES (March 21 – April 19)
The Ram has been described as having great passions with a desire for accomplishment, as well as being a born leader who instills a sense of competition. Lately, however, you are becoming more emotional. Try to channel your emotions to fuel your drive with temperance. With this embellishment, chances are better for accomplishment.

TAURUS (April 20 – May 21)
The usual slow-going Taurus could become frustrated and only see crimson when confronted with unruly sorts of people. The planet of communications is moving counter to its usual direction for most of this month; you may discover that you are plagued with many delays. Weigh things out sitting in the meadow.

GEMINI (May 22 – June 20)
Your self-esteem and well being may go through a shakedown. The need to surround yourself with people, who have integrity and style, will feel important. Education could be a priority, as you are inspired and excel in your field of interest. Go with gusto and grace.

CANCER (June 21 – July 22)
You will want to knock down anything that stands in the way of your sense of stability and break free of any limits imposed by others, or even ones you feel from within. You will jump through hoops and challenges, utilizing innocence and reason.

LEO (July 23 – Aug. 22)
Eating an unripe piece of fruit would give you indigestion. New ventures will take their time to ripen, as any type of birth does. The fast pace has slowed and you must wait your turn. Still, you have much to celebrate. Quiet mastery is your trump card.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 – Sept. 22)
Repeated efforts to get plans solidified and carried out may be eluding you. You are learning how to bridge the conflict within and find the split in your foundation. Deep inner work is needed and you are drawn toward alternative solutions. You are not a sand mandala, but your thoughts are.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 – Oct. 22)
If you were born during the baby boom, you may notice that your body is changing. Regardless of your age, you could experience an emotional weight gain as well. Health matters and emotional balance are signalled and you will use your Libran sensibility to stay aligned.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 – Nov. 21)
Your circle of friends will expand, as you decide to get back into the swing of things. You bring your precision and originality to the table. All creative outlets seek their muse and you are dancing on the path of the pioneers. You could even meet someone who helps shift your present doldrums into excitement.

SAGITTARIUS
(Nov. 22 – Dec. 21)
You seem to be lit from the inside and are embarking on making changes that will summon you to action. Doing more and speaking less, your life takes a powerful, yet silent, approach to accomplishment. Inner renovations or a possible new home could move your life in a new direction.

CAPRICORN
(Dec. 22 – Jan. 19)
You might have come through a turbulent winter and seek respite from any projects that are now completed. A holiday could be an answer or, at least, a time of kicking up your heals and enjoying some leisure. After a while, you will be ready for any new pursuits.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 – Feb. 19)
You have discovered that honesty might be the only way to get your point across. A rebellious nature has come over you and settling for the same old rut will not suffice. If you choose to fess up to anything you have been withholding, a new freedom will be yours. Use play as a tonic.

PISCES (Feb. 20 – March 20)
With Uranus and Mercury so closely aligned in Pisces, you will want to put your wheels in motion. You know where you are heading and how to get there. You are a mover and a shaker. Utilize the high energy now given to cut through illusion and turn your dreams into reality. You are in your stride.

Ilona Hedi Granik is a clairvoyant consultant and author with 31 years of experience in astrology, multi-media art and healing. ilona23@shaw.ca www.heartlightcentre.com

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Strange journey pushes borders

FILMS WORTH WATCHING • *ROBERT ALSTEAD*

In *The Three Burials of Melquiades Estrada*, cowboy Pete Perkins (Tommy Lee Jones) carries the body of his friend back to Mexico by mule.

I've never been to Texas, but it can't be much less inviting than the border town in *The Three Burials of Melquiades Estrada*. The directorial debut from Tommy Lee Jones, best known as the special agent from *Men In Black*, depicts life in small-town Texas as dumb, dusty and deadening, a transient place where people live in trailers and the primary diversion is casual adultery in motel rooms.

This is the starting point for a strange journey, in which a gruff cowboy called Pete Perkins (Jones), honours a promise to a dead friend, by taking his body back to Mexico.

The film opens in the desert of West Texas with the discovery of the corpse being chewed on by a coyote. The story, written by Guillermo Arriaga (*21 Grams*, *Ameros Perros*), moves back and forth in time, showing the development of a strong bond between the grizzled foreman and the young Mexican Melquiades, who he takes on as a herd on his cattle ranch. Theirs is a friendship that bridges the divide caused by prejudice and racism.

Mike Norton (Barry Pepper), a rookie border patrolman, is a stark contrast to the gentle Melquiades. We see Mike break a young Mexican girl's nose when she runs away from him while chasing down "illegals" – "You were way overboard there, boy," his superior tells him – and he treats his miserable, bored wife (January Jones) like dirt. It is while he is masturbating among the desert scrub over a copy of *Hustler* that the patrolman responds to the sound of gunfire by mistakenly shooting the hapless Melquiades as he tends his goats. The episode was inspired by a real-life incident in 1997, when US marines shot Esequiel Hernandez Jr., an innocent 18-year-old Texan.

Jones seems to carry the righteous anger of all abused border-country Mexicans on his shoulders.

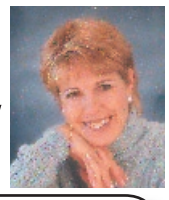
Enraged by the local sheriff's unwillingness to act on behalf of his friend's death, Pete takes matters into his own hands. He kidnaps the guilty patrolman and forces him, at gunpoint, to exhume the body. Captor and hostage then begin a quixotic journey across desert mountains, with the rotting body slung over a mule. For both men, the journey is an inward one as well, taking on a mythic quality, as Mike's past cruelties and callousness return to visit him.

Weirdness is not in short supply here, as the borders of acceptability are crossed. Moments of grotesque comedy – whenever the decomposing stiff moves centre stage, for example – are offset by elements of *Dukes of Hazard* type idiocy, as the cops in hot pursuit slip on banana skins. However, an undercurrent of melancholy suffuses the film, establishing a tone that seems eloquently enhanced by the stark, arid landscape. One scene, in particular, where the two men meet a blind hermit (played by drummer Levon Helm of *The Band*), who feeds the men and then makes a parting request, is haunting in its simplicity. It forces Pete to question just how far he is prepared to go. For the audience though, he probably crossed the mark long ago.

Tsotsi is a redemption tale told in the patois of South African townships. A violent, 19-year-old thug discovers a baby in the back seat of his stolen car, after having shot the mother. Instead of abandoning the bawling infant, he parcels it up in a brown paper bag and takes it back to his slum. As he responds to the infant's demands, memories of his cruel past come flooding back, and he finds his humanity and compassion slowly rekindled. The story could have come across as overly manipulative, but is deftly handled with slick cinematography.

Robert Alstead is currently making a cycling documentary entitled You Never Bike Alone. *(www.youneverbikealone.com) He writes for www.iofilm.ca*

Gwen Randall-Young
Chartered Psychologist



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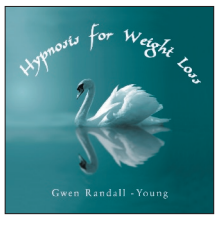

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Drug topic forum

WISE TEENS

Maybe he'll never listen

He had a way of lighting up the room… I remember so perfectly when we decided to get married. We had Kevin, our four-year-old son, and after him, we moved into our apartment. That was when his little habit really took off. The man who lived below us was a crack dealer and I'm sure a lot-of-other-things dealer as well that I was never told about.

I asked my husband to stop a few times, but to no avail. Once you're on the inside, any habit is a bad one. I loved that man so much and I know he didn't mean to hurt me. It was the drugs!

Danielle Mably, grade 12, Newmarket High School, Newmarket, Ontario

> ***Once you're on the inside, any habit is a bad one.***

Words from an addict

So here I was spending my weekends getting absolutely hammered and high out of my tree. Spending my days high, making memories to look back on these high school years. Goals are broken and forgotten because nothing else matters but the high. There goes another line of coke, before school, in school, and after school. Desperate enough to even take a line before practice.

Drugs are the black hole of life; once sucked in, it can be difficult to return. Just one toke and one beer will not be your last. Quitting drugs is as hard a thing as anyone can encounter, and you can now hear this from a person who is six months clean. Me! If I could turn back time, I would. I would never have tried any drugs because the pain of the drugs is more immense than the struggle of life itself.

Jacqui Bresser, grade 12, Gleneagle Secondary School, Port Moody, BC

The mercy of the mind

Alcoholism doesn't necessarily begin because someone is depressed or because their life is unbearable. Sometimes, it begins as just fun, casual drinking. I started drinking because my life was too good. Too easy. I had to invent things to complain about. So irritatingly perfect that I couldn't breathe. There are many things that take time to build and seconds to destroy.

Nobody knew about my problem, so I had to wonder how many problems I didn't know about. Life is such a fragile thing, and since I've thrown my world all around, I can't even pick up the pieces anymore.

I think the next time I want danger and excitement, I'll go skydiving. And I'll be thankful instead of spiteful.

Nell Carter, grade 12, Newmarket High School, Newmarket, Ontario

Reprinted with permission from Teensmag. Teensmag *is a publication written by teens about alcohol and drug abuse education and prevention. The editor and publisher is Dr. Merv Mason, a psychologist with many years of experience in alcohol and drug-abuse education and prevention. This publication is a useful resource tool in helping to educate teens against the dangers of substance abuse. It has contributed an important part in drug awareness and prevention education over the past 17 years. It is distributed through corporate sponsorship to BC secondary schools, police detachments, the aboriginal community and substance abuse centres.*

Here are a few places to call for help:
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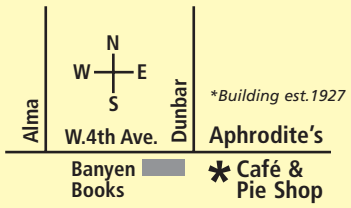

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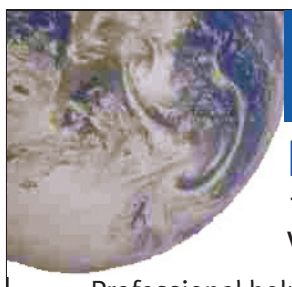

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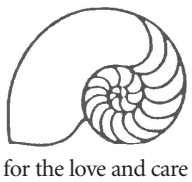

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Suzuki cont'd from p. 16
– from childhood lead poisoning and mercury emissions to climate change, reproductive health and nuclear weapons – political appointees have distorted and censored scientific findings that contradict established policies."

Science should not be a partisan issue. In fact, perhaps the best criticism of the American government's politicization of science comes from Republican representative Sherwood Boehlert, who is also chair of the House Science Committee. In a letter to NASA administration, he condemned Dr. Hansen's censorship, writing, "Political figures ought to be reviewing their public statements to make sure they are consistent with the best available science. Scientists should not be reviewing their statements to make sure they are consistent with the current political orthodoxy."

The top climate scientist at NASA has accused the Bush administration of trying to silence him.

I could not agree more. I obtained my PhD from the University of Chicago in 1961 and shudder to think of what would have happened to my emerging discipline of genetics had the government of the time deemed that it did not conform to established policy. It's ironic that the current government of a country that prides itself on innovation and the quality of its research should be trying to censor the same people responsible for America's continued technological and scientific success.

Not all of Bush's actions on science are off base. In his recent State of the Union address, he committed to a doubling of federal funds for basic scientific research. At a time when more and more research funds are dedicated to applied research, usually with some kind of industrial application, it's refreshing to see an emphasis on the basics that form the backbone of scientific knowledge.

Perhaps Bush's recent announcement signals a change of tune. But unless we see a radical shift, the best advice I can give Harper is that if he hopes to learn anything from Bush's scientific record, it's what not to do.

Join the Nature Challenge and learn more at www.davidsuzuki.org.

Community cont'd from p. 9
that these are private conversations occurring around kitchen tables, water coolers and in restaurants. Seldom do these critical, community-forming questions move into our institutions or the broader community. Yet, these *are* the essential questions.

When we don't answer these questions as a community, when we have no agreements about why we belong together, the institutions we create to serve us become battlegrounds that serve no one. All energy goes into warring agendas, new regulations and stronger protective measures against those we dislike and fear. Our institutions dissipate into incoherence and impotence. They do serve us, but only as mirrors that reflect back to us the lack of cohering agreements at the heart of our community. Without these agreements about why we belong together, we can never develop institutions that make any sense at all. In the absence of these agreements, our instinct of community leads us to a community of "me," not a community of "we."

Most public meetings, although originating from a democratic ideal, serve only to increase our separation from each other. Agendas and processes try to honour our differences, but end up increasing our distance. They are "public hearings" where nobody is listening and everyone is demanding airtime. Communities aren't created from such processes; they are destroyed by the increasing fear and separation that these processes engender.

We don't need more public hearings. We need much more public listening, in processes where we come together and commit to staying together long enough to discover those ideas and issues that are significant to each of us.

All of us can reach entirely new levels of possibility together, possibilities that are not available from soapbox rhetoric. To achieve this, we need to begin these conversations about purpose and shared significance and commit to staying in them. We *are* capable of creating wonderful and vibrant communities when we discover what dreams of possibility we share. The history of most community organizing and great social change movements can be traced back to such conversations.

As we create communities from the cohering centre of shared significance, from a mutual belief in why we belong together, we will discover what is already visible everywhere around us in living systems. Our great creativity and diversity and desire for contribution and relationships blossom when the heart of our community is clear and beckoning, and when we refrain from cluttering our paths with proscriptions and demands. The future of community is best taught by life.

Drug Bust cont'd from p. 13
Answer a couple of those in the affirmative and you are set to become a new patient for one of these drugs. The punch line of any self-diagnostic test, by the way, is as blasé and predictable as they come: "See your doctor." After all, who else has the power to send you to sleep heaven with a "safe," monitored, prescription drug?

And then there is the perennial disease mongering, promulgated by our friendly media always striving to do the right thing. Some handy examples from the US media:

CNN: "Three out of four Americans have sleep problems."

MSNBC: "Too many of us don't get enough sleep."

Chicago Tribune: "A good night's sleep is a pipe dream."

Hmmm.

But are we really a nation of zombies, as the press would have us believe? Are we really in the midst of an epidemic of sleeplessness? Are we putting ourselves in danger, daily, trying to stay awake while driving or operating heavy machinery, like a photocopier?

I beg to differ. Yet where can we turn for trusted advice on this state of affairs?

The National Sleep Foundation, that's where. And it has this to say: "Seventy million Americans (or about 7.5 million Canadians) suffer from sleep problems." It also states that three-quarters of American adults frequently experience some sort of sleep problem, including waking at night or snoring, and that one-quarter of us report that sleep problems have some affect on our daily life.

Me? I suffer from a bad case of military terminology that jolts me awake in the middle of the night. It doesn't help that deadlines (such as the one for my monthly column) are whizzing by.

But what about the rest of you whiners? Sure, we're an overactive, plugged-in, instant-gratification, pill-for-every-ill bunch. And many of us are overactive Type A personalities, who multi-task and sword-juggle our way through life. Should we be whingeing constantly about how much our minds buzz in the middle of the night?

Sleep hygiene is the answer. Things like getting enough exercise, not eating full-sized pepperoni pizzas or not chugging a quart of gin before tucking in for the night seem to be, at least, a place to start. Fresh air, good covers and a dark place to sleep also help.

But let's take a closer look at who funds the insomniac propaganda. A little digging uncovers groups like the American Academy of Sleep Medicine and the National Sleep Foundation, partly funded by... well, surprise, surprise – it's the very makers of the drugs who are launching tactical nuclear warheads into the general population, hoping more of us show up at our doctors with incurable sleeplessness and demanding a script.

This gem comes from the National Sleep Foundation's website:

"Through its Ambien brand, Sanofi-Synthelabo has provided unrestricted support for National Sleep Awareness Week and other NSF initiatives, and has contributed generously to other programs that have advanced the fields of sleep science and sleep medicine, as well as public awareness of the importance of sleep and the need to recognize and treat sleep disorders, including insomnia."

I should add that the pharmaceutical industry is not alone in disease mongering our ability to saw a few logs at night. The major manufacturers of "sleep products," such as duvets, mattresses, beds and other pornaphrenalia that send us into dreamland, have their fingers in the cookie jar as well.

So, what's a guy to do, snapping to attention at three in the morning?

Sleep hygiene is the answer. Things like getting enough exercise, not eating full-sized pepperoni pizzas or not chugging a quart of gin before tucking in for the night seem to be, at least, a place to start. Fresh air, good covers and a dark place to sleep also help.

But do you still have trouble sleeping? All I can say is don't become collateral damage in a war that we'll not win. Do as I do. Get up. Be productive. Write letters to your local newspaper telling them how much you resent being turned into a patient by Big Pharma's wars. Anything. Don't submit.

If all that fails, put on your flak jacket and keep your head down.

The shrapnel is flying.

Alan Cassels is the co-author of Selling Sickness: How the World's Biggest Pharmaceutical Companies Are Turning Us All Into Patients, *and a drug policy researcher at the University of Victoria. He has spent most of the last 10 years studying how clinical research about prescription drugs is communicated to policy makers, prescribers and consumers. He is also the founder of Media Doctor Canada (www.mediadoctor.ca), which evaluates the reporting of medical treatments in Canada's media.*

Ann Mortifee cont'd from p. 7
both and all my other ancestors that live on within me. Having lost both of my parents, it is easier to feel their presence within.

When I was creating *The Trust for Sustainable Forestry*, there was a point when I was sitting at my father's desk, realizing that before him the desk had belonged to my grandfather. My grandfather had worked tirelessly to create the Umflozi Game Reserve in Zululand. His passion was the conservation of land as habitat for animals. I realized that I was passionate about the same thing, and I said to myself, "Perhaps this isn't my urge at all. Perhaps this is my grandfather's unfulfilled continuing desire to see that animals have space to survive." It's all so interesting.

CG: How has music helped your awakening?

AM: It has been the place where I have done my deepest dreaming. It has led me forward, always. When I look at *When the Rains Come*, I am living now what I wrote then. I wrote about a Sangoma creating an amulet underneath the light of the moon. She's carving a bone that is eventually given to Emily, the woman in the play. And what do I have around my neck, but the very amulet that I wrote about then. I didn't realize at the time that it was prophetic. Another thing in that play was that the two main characters, Emily and Kenyele, knew each other and cared deeply for one another when they were younger. They were separated from each other for 20 years, became strong in their own right and finally met one other when they were older. This is another synchronicity, as I am now with a man who I first met, sang with and became friends with when I was much younger, and then we didn't meet again for many years. And many of the qualities I wrote about in their relationship are also paralleled in our relationship. I believe that what we dream intensely appears later in our lives in some way.

CG: Are you comfortable with people knowing who this man is?

AM: Sure.

CG: So the fact that I saw you in Banyen Books with Paul Horn doesn't need to be kept under wraps?

AM: Not on my account. I feel extremely blessed to be with a man of such depth and beauty. Both of us have chosen to follow the deepest urgings of our spirits and to follow music where it has wanted us to go, rather than where the lure of fame or fortune would dictate that we should go. Our careers have run parallel in many ways to one another. It is an absolute joy to be sharing this leg of the journey with a man of such quality.

CG: Do you feel a presence when you're singing?

AM: When I first step on the stage, it's like surfing, swimming to catch a wave. You have to work to get there, but once you do, it grabs you and you don't have to do another thing. It carries you the rest of the way. It's like riding the current in the river. There's a moment, and then, poof, I'm gone, and it's happening by itself. Some days, the current is more powerful than others; sometimes it's less powerful, and sometimes you miss the wave altogether and you have to go by remote control. Hopefully, you're good enough and talented enough and you've had enough years to be able to get away with it, but you know you're faking and it's a horrible feeling. But if you catch the wave, then it's effortless and there's nothing like it in the world.

The second song I ever wrote was called *I'm a Hollow Reed – Play Me*. That's what it's like. You become an instrument and it takes you where it wants to go and you find your voice able to do things it can't usually do in rehearsal. It is a beautiful encounter with mystery.

CG: How can we help Africa?

AM: There are a million ways to help. First we have to recognize that Africa is our root. If the root of the tree is so ill, it's telling us something very important about the whole of humanity. And our root is very, very sick. And the fact that we don't care is heartbreaking. These are our ancestors, our brothers and sisters. This is where we come from. The people of Africa are dying at a phenomenal rate, equal to a tsunami hitting the shores of Africa every two weeks. That's how many people are dying from AIDS. Why aren't we running toward them with open arms? Why don't we notice this unbelievable devastation?

We can all do something. I have been involved with Shivon Robinsong and the Gettin' Higher Choir of Victoria with what we call The Kapasseni Project. We took on a little community in Zimbabwe. On June 2 and 3, we're celebrating the tenth anniversary concert of our relationship with that community. We've been raising $10,000 to $25,000 a year. We've built wells, a six-room school, a health clinic and planted orchards. We've actually made Kampasseni into a community that has hope. We have a vested interest in what happens. We know the names of the people who live there and that really helps. We can all find a place to contribute something. Whether it's the Stephen Lewis Foundation or Unicef, there are a million ways we can help.

CG: Any final words?

AM: The real need is for each of us to do our own deep healing work so that we are capable of showing up in our lives, moment by moment, in a good way. The more present we can be in our bodies, the more we are able to hear the still small voice within that tells us which way to go.

It is not only throwing up our hands and saying, "Thy will be done." It is just as important to be able to take a stand and say, "Thy will and my will are one." And I will to do something, no matter how small, to alleviate a little bit of suffering today. We can't change the world, but we can, as Mother Teresa said, do " small things with great love."

How full is the cup?

TWENTY SOMETHING • *ISHI DINIM*

Nine requisites for contented living: Health enough to make work a pleasure. Wealth enough to support your needs. Strength to battle with difficulties and overcome them. Grace enough to confess your sins and forsake them. Patience enough to toil until some good is accomplished. Charity enough to see some good in your neighbour. Love enough to move you to be useful and helpful to others. Faith enough to make real the things of God. Hope enough to remove all anxious fears concerning the future.

– Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

What I'm interested in right now isn't personal growth. I understand how to benefit myself; like many people, I spend most of my time doing just that. I feel isolated. I know I'm loved and all, by friends and family, but there's something missing. What I want more than anything else is to help someone, to have what I do matter to them. They don't have to know that I had a hand in it; I don't need the recognition. More than guilt or altruism motivating this, I just want to balance out how much I consume with some sort of benefits-sharing program (uh, that sounds like economic speak). I want to feel connected, but in an unusual way. I'm willing to have a lot less, but, so *they* get more?

We must move forward. News alert folks: people are dying all around the world. They're dying to make our lives better, and they might kill to have what we have. We must keep the poor, huddling masses off our doorsteps. Let them come along at their own speed. The devil is in the details, but so is God, I guess.

I look out at the world, a curious child yearning to experience the mysteries that life has to share. I tuck my head between my knees to hide from all its ugliness. I vacillate between wonder and horror, a thirst for knowledge and a wish for ignorance. I want to know the conditions that created my food, but do I want to know the same about my car and my shoes? I seek out the truth and do nothing with it. There is no time to act on it in an 80-hour workweek.

Who am I? So much of what I do is put into a job. It gets really hard to separate my identity from my actions. I spend so much time working, or recovering from the work, that my personal time gets ground into a thin sliver. I often hear people talk about waking up into a life they never planned. This is true for the factory garment worker at 17 cents an hour, the fruit picker on piecework, the dirt-covered miner, and me. We never planned to get stuck like this. The not so funny thing is there're probably millions of people wishing they could be stuck like me.

This glass of water sure tastes great. I wish I could send them over some; there must be a way.

Ishi graduated from Emily Carr Institute of Art and Design in 2001, with a BFA major in photography. He makes films, collects cacti, and ponders many things. Currently he is trying to figure out what to do with the rest his life. contactishi@yahoo.ca

Waiting to hear echoes back.

Women's Day cont'd from p. 19
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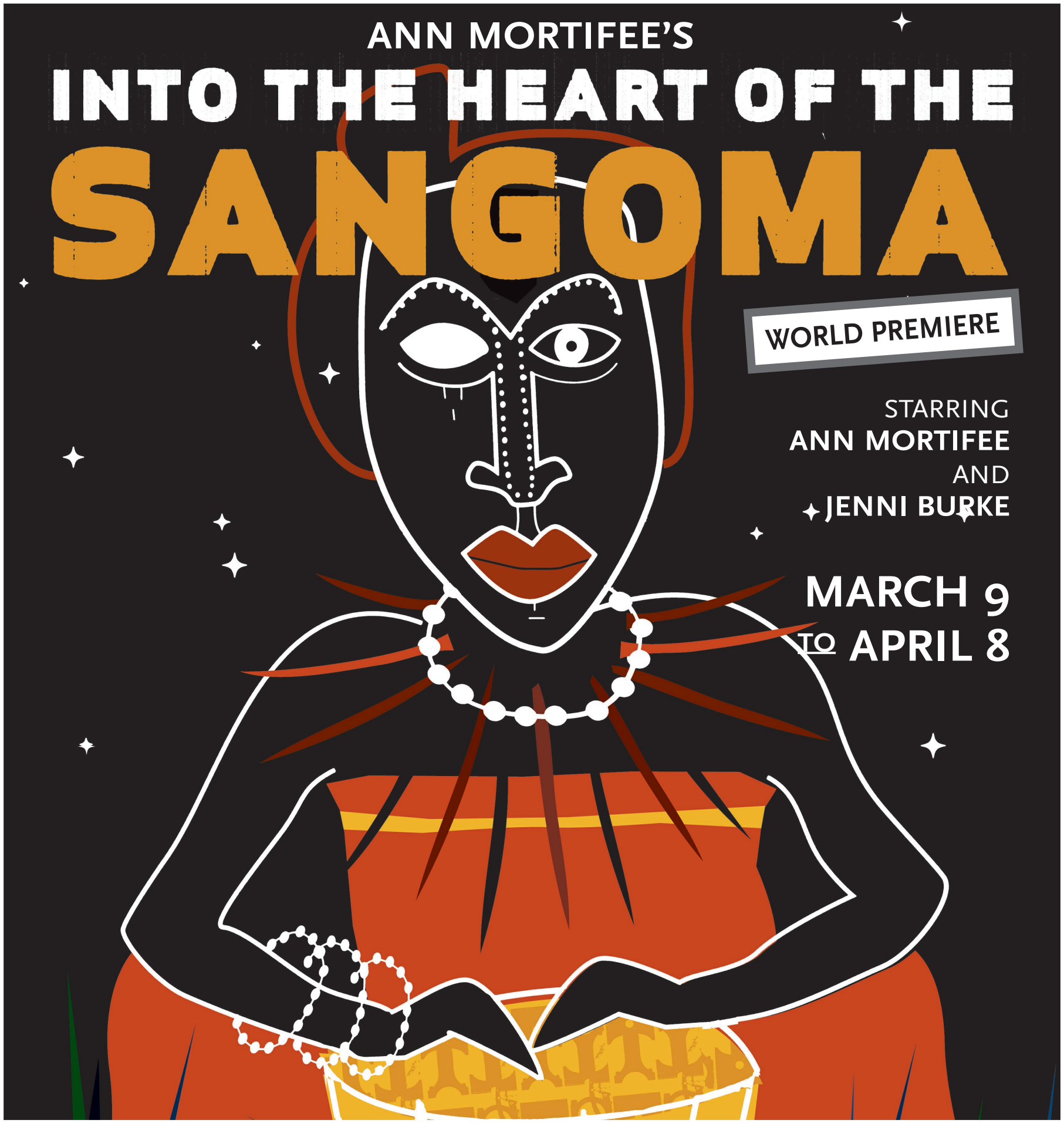

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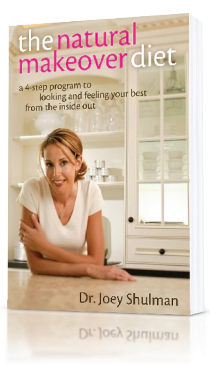

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